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RHMFISS/DIRJIATF SOUTH
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 000527

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/29/2019

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SUBJECT: CORRECTED COPY DIPLOMATIC CLEARANCE REQUESTS
DURING PANAMA'S POLITICAL TRANSITION

Classified By: Ambassador Barbara J. Stephenson for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Panama's next President, Ricardo Martinelli, and his cabinet will be sworn in on 01 July 2009. The current government is not approving any diplomatic clearance requests for ships or aircraft that occur on or after 01 July. Beginning on 01 July a new group of officials will be sworn in and will be empowered to approve diplomatic clearance requests from that point forward. Since this new group will lack familiarity with the diplomatic clearance request process, it is vital to our future relationship with the incoming government that all ships, aircraft and personnel closely adhere to the rules set forth in the Foreign Clearance Guide (FCG). Current guidance may be viewed at: www.fcg.pentagon.mil

¶12. (C) Failure to closely adhere to this guidance could result in violations of Panama's territorial waters and/or airspace, and could in turn cause great damage to our relationship with the inbound Martinelli administration. Therefore, short-notice requests shall be avoided during this transition period (especially between 30 June and 13 July 2009), except for valid emergencies such as MEDEVACS. Furthermore, it is imperative that every ship and aircraft bound for Panama confirm with DAO Panama City that it has received clearance prior to entering Panamanian waters or airspace.

¶13. (C) Diplomatic clearance requests submitted to DAO Panama City that fail to adhere to the advance notice requirements set forth in the FCG will be rejected, unless the request is related to a genuine emergency.

STEPHENSON